

REMARKS

This Amendment is being filed with a Request for Continued Examination. Entry of the amendment is requested before examination.

Independent claim 1, as amended, overcomes the § 102 rejection in view of Caney for at least the reason that what appears to be the alleged passageway of Caney does not communicate fluid after the pipe sections are connected together. Furthermore, Caney fails to disclose a passageway that is eccentric with respect to an axis, which is concentric with axes of the first and second pipe sections. Therefore, for at least any of these reasons, claim 1 overcomes the § 102 rejection in view of Caney.

Newly-added independent claims 97 and 101 are patentable for at least the same reasons. In this regard, the connector assembly of independent claim 97 also includes a passageway that is eccentric with respect to an axis of the first and second openings that receive tubing sections, a feature not disclosed in Caney. Furthermore, Caney fails to disclose an eccentric passageway to communicate fluid after first and second tubing sections are connected together. Likewise, newly-added independent claim 101 discloses providing a passageway that is eccentric with respect to an axis of first and second openings that receive first and second tubing sections. Caney fails to disclose this feature as well as providing a passageway that communicates fluid after first and second tubing sections are connected together, as recited in claim 101.

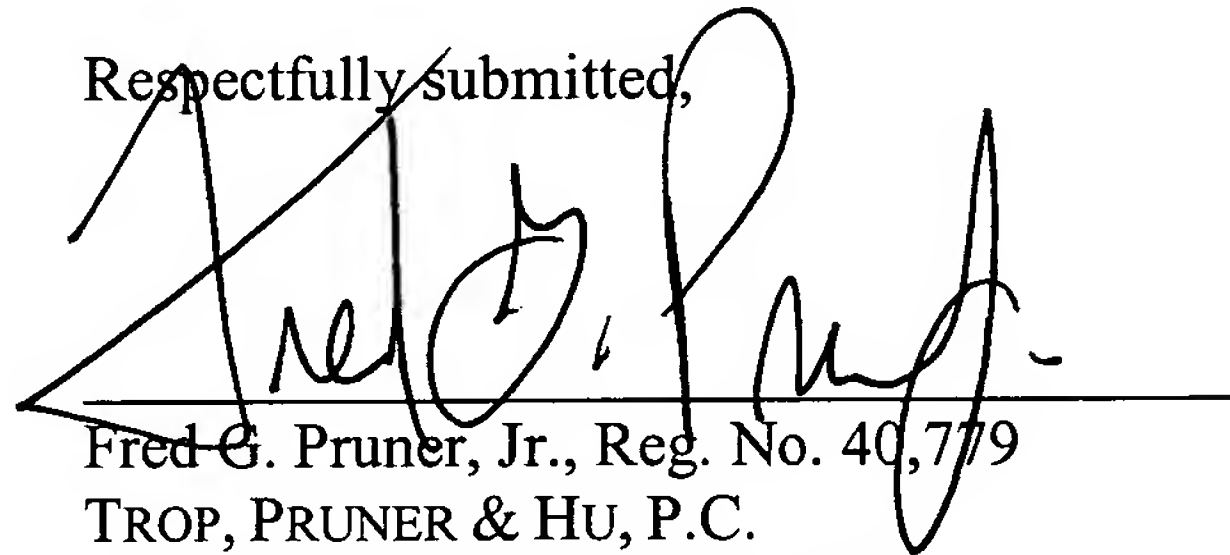
Dependent claims 2-5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 18, 22, 98-100 and 102-105 are patentable for at least the same reasons as the claims from which they depend.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicant requests a favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 20-1504 (SHL.0238US).

Date: December 12, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fred G. Pruner, Jr.", is written over a horizontal line.

Fred G. Pruner, Jr., Reg. No. 40,779
TROP, PRUNER & HU, P.C.
1616 S. VOSS ROAD, SUITE 750
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77057
713/468-8880 [Phone]
713/468-8883 [Fax]